## McKeithen Offer for Testimony

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# Partin Declined Immunity

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(States-Item Bureau)

BATON ROUGE — Gov. John J. McKeithen offered Teamster boss Edward Grady Partin immunity from prosecution if he would bare his soul at a public hearing of the Labor Management Commission in 1968, the States-Item has learned.

Partin turned the suggestion down and sent word back to the governor that he didn't have anything to admit.

The offer was relayed through Baton Rouge City Judge William Hawk Daniels, an acquaintance of Partin.

IT WAS MADE March 19 at the conclusion of a series of public hearings conducted by the Labor-Management Commission that month.

It followed by one day a suggestion by McKeithen to the chief investigator, A. Harry Roberts, that the commission discontinue its public hearing into the Baton Rouge concrete war. The governor felt the concrete war had been publicized enough in the press and was "old hat" to the public.

However, the concrete business became the basis for the only major charge against Partin when a federal grand jury indicted the business agent of Teamster Local No. 5 and a concrete company owner, Ted Dunham Jr., for violations of the antitrust laws and extortion.

When the public hearings were being conducted in 1968, McKeithen was so anxious to bring them to a successful conclusion that he expressed willingness to Daniels to give Partin immunity if he would reveal what he knew about labor strife in the Baton Rouge area.

PARTIN WAS a prime target of the investigation being conducted by the commission staff.

Members of Teamsters Local No. 5 had been tabbed by McKeithen as the culprits in the shooting melee at the Bergeron Construction Co. site in the town of Plaquemine the previous January.

Caught on the horns of a dilemma, McKeithen had to push the labor-management probe to mollify a skeptical industry and at the same time was defending the action to the U.S. Justice Department. The federal agency feared the probe was part of an effort to free James Hoffa, International Teamster president, who was imprisoned on a jury tampering conviction. Partin was the key witness.

On March 19, McKeithen was in the Senate chamber where the hearings were being conducted when he spotted Walter Sheridan, the former Justice Department investigator who was Partin's contact against Hoffa. He invited Sheridan, whom he had met the previous month in a

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Washington hotel room, to his office. They discussed the labor-management situation.

Daniels arrived in the governor's suite and after Sheridan left, McKeithen and the judge conferred at length again on the labor-management situation.

M'KEITHEN then induced Daniels to ride with him to the airport and in the executive plane to New Orleans where the governor was to catch a plane to New York on an industrial inducement trip.

It was on the plane that McKeithen made his suggestion to Daniels that he relay the message to Partin. Daniels agreed, but only if McKeithen assigned then Public Safety Director Thomas Burbank to be present as a witness.

The next day, McKeithen called Burbank from New York and the state police chief, Daniels and Partin arranged a meeting two days later at the judge's house in Baton Rouge.

Partin, it was learned, told Burbank to have McKeithen tell him what he wanted said and he would think about it but he had done nothing to admit to.

THE TEAMSTER boss later testified before the commission but his testimony shed little light on the situation and he was asked few questions by the commission.

McKeithen had been anxious for the labor-management dispute to be settled. Some $500 million in new plant construction had been shut down for a brief period in 1967 and the state was suffering nationally in its industrial inducement program.

The governor expressed interest recently in helping a prospective purchaser to get financing to buy an auto race track in which Partin had an interest, if the teamster would leave the state. The deal fell through, but the track subsequently was sold to another group.